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7. — *Historical Sketches of the Town of Leicester, Massachusetts, during the First Century from its Settlement.* By EMORY WASHBURN. Boston: Printed by John Wilson and Son. 1860. 8vo. pp. 467.

WITHIN the last thirty years much attention has been given to the study of local history, both at home and on the other side of the Atlantic. In England many county and borough histories have been published, which are rich in antiquarian lore and pictorial illustrations, while we have had in this country an uncounted number of State, county, and town histories, as well as histories of churches, colleges, schools, and courts,—from the thin pamphlet comprising a hastily prepared anniversary address or quarter-century sermon, to one, two, or even three elaborate volumes, the results of life-long labor. Many of these productions have possessed a merely local and temporary interest, while others have gathered up, and made available for the uses of general history, much perishable material of no little importance as illustrating the progress of the country. Among the more important of these works Governor Washburn's elegant volume, now before us, must be included. Leicester is not, indeed, a very old or a very populous town. It was not settled until 1717, and when the last State census was taken, in 1855, it had less than two thousand six hundred inhabitants; and its history has therefore a much less various interest than belongs to our older and more populous maritime towns. But it has always numbered among its residents some men of ability and influence, and it has sent forth not a few who have risen to high station in the national and State governments, or who have found in the great centres of trade and commerce a broader field for the exercise of their talents than was offered in their native town. Among these Governor Washburn himself will always hold an honored place.

He has studied the annals of his native town with filial affection, and he has drawn from his large stores of general historical knowledge many interesting details for the further elucidation of his subject. We presume that his volume contains everything which the residents of Leicester can desire to know about their ancestors, while at many points the narrative connects itself with the general history of the Commonwealth. Many of the sketches of the early inhabitants are replete with interest, even to those who care nothing about the local controversies which usually enter so largely into our town histories; and we have much interesting information in regard to the patriotic part performed by the men of Leicester in the war of the Revolution, and in regard to those enterprises which have contributed to the general prosperity of the State. The Appendix contains several interesting histor-

ical documents; and the volume is illustrated by a few portraits and other engravings. It has also a very good Index, but is without a Table of Contents.

- 8.—*Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 1858–1860. Selected from the Records.* Boston: Printed for the Society. 1860. 8vo. pp. xii. and 465.

THIS volume, the second of the series, brings down the record of proceedings to the last Annual Meeting, comprising the meetings from April 8, 1858, to March 8, 1860, inclusive. Like the previous volume it contains much interesting matter, and is creditable both to the Society whose proceedings it records, and to the gentlemen under whose auspices it has been published. Among the more interesting and important papers in the volume are numerous original letters of the time of the Revolution, drawn from the Belknap papers, the Heath papers, and other sources; some extracts from Dr. Belknap's journal, and from a diary of the same period kept by Thomas Newell; a carefully prepared paper on the "Uniform of the Revolutionary Army," by Judge Warren; an admirable essay, by Governor Washburn, on the "Transfer of the Colony Charter of 1628 from England to Massachusetts"; and a very thorough discussion of the subject of "Naturalization in the American Colonies," by Mr. Joseph Willard. The volume also includes most of the commemorative addresses delivered before the Society on the deaths of Prescott, Hallam, Humboldt, and Irving, and some other papers of general interest, though not strictly historical in their character; and it is embellished with portraits of Sir Richard Saltonstall and of Mr. Prescott. It affords a gratifying proof of the increased prosperity of the Society, and of the determination of its members to contribute liberally toward the illustration of American history. We shall look with interest for the new volume of Collections announced as in preparation.

- 9.—*Elements of Chemical Physics.* By JOSIAH P. COOKE, JR. Erving Professor of Chemistry and Mineralogy in Harvard University. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co. 1860. 8vo. pp. 739.

THERE is hardly any department of natural science of which we really know so little as that of Molecular or Chemical Physics. In studying it we are reminded of our ignorance at every step. We only know that the